

THE CORRESPONDENT.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

BY GEORGE HOUSTON, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

DEATH-BED REPENTANCE OF LIBERALS.

Mr. Editor—There is no subject so ardently laid hold of, or so frequently dwelt on by the priesthood, as the supposed *recantation* of liberals at the period of their dissolution. It forms the constant theme on which they found their reproaches against philosophy, and, falsely, represent the writings of philosophers as dangerous to society. Those who have been deterred from perusing the works of Voltaire, of Hume, and of Paine, (the individuals against whose memory the shafts of calumny are most frequently directed) by the dreadful anathemas and denunciations of the priests, will regard their writings with horror, and consign them to the flames, so long as they continue to repose confidence in their spiritual and interested cheats. But I appeal to those who have read them, unawed by the frowns and threats of the clergy, whether they have ever found the least immorality in these writings. For my part, and I have gone through every liberal work that has escaped the destroying hands of bigots and fanatics, I have not in any one of them found a single sentence calculated to injure society or individuals. On the contrary, the authors alluded to, whatever were their *practices*, have written the strictest *morality*; and "Volney's Law of Nature" is a moral code superior to any other in existence.

As to the alleged recantation of Voltaire the story is too vague and ridiculous to merit serious attention:—"Voltaire (it is said) during a severe indisposition, sent for Dr. Trousseau, who, when he came, found him in the greatest agony, exclaiming with the utmost horror, "I am abandoned by God and man." He then said,—"doctor, I will give you half of what I am worth, if you will give me six month's life." The doctor answered, "Sir, you cannot live six weeks!"—Voltaire replied, "then I shall go to hell, and *you will go with me.*"

This is really a stupid story. In the first place, if Voltaire wished to recant and repent, were not six *weeks* time enough? Do the priests not often make six *minutes* suffice? Do they not press the malefactor to repentance even when the rope is about his neck? Do they not make it an intrinsic part of their system, that a death-bed repentance is sufficient, and that the greater the sinner the greater the certainty of salvation? But it is clear that the whole matter was a joke on the part of Voltaire, even if we admit the doctor's story to be true to the letter. If

he was serious about going to hell, (an idea of the reality of which, as a place of future punishment never existed in his mind after he was thirty years old) why should he say to the doctor otherwise than as a joke, "and you will go with me?" What had the doctor done who seems to have been a Christian, to have been associated with Voltaire in this future hell? The whole thing—the asking for six months life from the doctor, proves nothing more than that Voltaire preserved his witty and gay spirit under all circumstances, and played off a joke on the pious doctor.

When at last Voltaire was lying on a bed of sickness, from which he never rose, the marquis de Villete (with whom the philosopher resided at Paris) when he perceived his visitor's death approaching, he sent for Mons. Bonnet, Cure of St. Sulpice, to persuade him if possible, to comply with the usual custom of religion, in order that the proper honors might be paid to his remains. The Cure began by questioning Voltaire, "if he believed in the divinity of Jesus Christ," but was hastily stopped by the wit's saying, "Ah! M. le Cure, if I pass that article to you, you will demand if I do not also believe in the Holy Ghost, and so on, until you finish by the *Bull Unigenitus*." The Cure departed; but in a few hours after a great change appearing, he came a second time, and began with putting his hand on the dying man's head as he lay in bed; upon which Voltaire raised his own hand to the curate's head, and pushed him away, saying, 'I come into the world without a *Bonnet*, and will go out without one, therefore let me die in peace.' He accordingly turned his back towards the cure, and died in a few minutes, without speaking another word, on the 30th of May; and as a proof of the perfect understanding that he died an unbeliever, the archbishop of Paris refused every application that was made to him for the rites of Christian burial. The marquis de Villette and Voltaire's nephew contested the matter with the archbishop some days, and the result was, that Voltaire should be taken in a coach, *as if living*, to his nephew's abbey at Sellieres, in Champagne, accompanied by himself and the marquis, where he was interred with the utmost privacy.

On the death of the justly celebrated David Hume, an attempt was made by the fanatics at Edinburgh to create an impression that he had also recanted his religious opinions. This attempt, however, was defeated by his friend Dr. Adam Smith, who addressed a letter to Mr. William Strahan, a gentleman well known in the literary circles, in which he gives a circumstantial detail of the manner in which Mr. Hume supported his last illness. This letter was afterwards published as a continuation of "the life of Hume written by himself."

"Though (observes Mr. Smith) in this letter, in his own judgment, his disease was mortal, yet Mr. Hume allowed himself to be prevailed on to try the effects of a long journey. He repaired to London, and his disorder seemed to yield to exercise and a change of air. He was next advised to go to Bath, to drink the waters; which appeared for some time to have so good an effect upon him, that even himself began to entertain a better opinion of his own health. But, the doctor adds, symptoms soon returned with their usual violence, and from that moment he gave up all thoughts of recovery, but submitted with the utmost

cheerfulness, and the most perfect complacency and resignation. Upon his return to Edinburgh, though he found himself much weaker, yet his cheerfulness never abated, and he continued to divert himself, as usual, with correcting his own works for a new edition, with reading books of amusement, with the conversation of his friends; and, sometimes in the evening with a party at his favorite game of whist. His cheerfulness was so great, and his conversation and amusements ran so much in their usual strain, that, notwithstanding all bad symptoms, many people could not believe he was dying."

In a conversation, one day, with the author of this letter, when Dr. Smith was expressing some 'faint hopes,' from his friend's cheerfulness, he answered, "Your hopes are groundless. An habitual diarrhœa of more than a year's standing, would be a very bad disease at any age: at my age it is a mortal one. When I lie down in the evening, I feel myself weaker than when I rose in the morning; and when I rise in the morning, weaker than when I lay down in the evening. I am sensible, besides, that some of my vital parts are affected, so that I must soon die." "Well," said I, "if it must be so, you have at least the satisfaction of leaving all your friends, your brother's family in particular, in great prosperity." He said that he felt that satisfaction so sensibly, that when he was reading a few days before, Lucian's dialogues of the dead, among all the excuses that are alledged to Charon for not entering readily into his boat, he could not find one that fitted him; for he had no enemies upon whom he wished to revenge himself. "I could not well imagine," said he, "what excuse I could make to Charon in order to obtain a little delay. I have done every thing of consequence which I ever meant to do, and I could at no time expect to leave my relations and friends in a better situation than that in which I am now likely to leave them; I therefore, have all reason to die contented." He then diverted himself with inventing several jocular excuses, which he supposed he might make to Charon, and with imagining the very surly answers which it might suit the character of Charon to return to them.

"Upon farther consideration," said he, "I thought I might say to him, good Charon, I have been correcting my works for a new edition. Allow me a little time that I may see how the public receives the alterations." But Charon would answer, "when you have seen the effect of these you will be for making other alterations. There will be no end of such excuses; so, honest friend, *please step* into the boat." But I might still urge, "have a little patience, good Charon, I have been endeavoring to open the eyes of the public. If I live a few years longer, I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition." But Charon would then lose all temper and decency. "You loitering rogue, that will not happen these many hundred years. Do you fancy I will grant you a lease for so long a term? Get into the boat this instant, you lazy, loitering rogue."

The foregoing conversation happened on the 8th of August. He was now become so weak, that the company of his most intimate friends fatigued him: for his spirits continued in such a flow, and his social disposition remained still so unbroken, that, when any friend was with him, he could not help talking with greater exertion than suited the weakness of

his body. At his own desire, therefore, Dr. Smith agreed to leave Edinburgh on condition that Mr. Hume should send for him, whenever he wished to see him—Dr. Black, the physician who attended him, promising in the mean time to send Dr. Smith occasionally an account of the state of Mr. Hume's health.

On the 22d of August, Dr. Black informed Dr. Smith by letter that although Mr. Hume grew still weaker, he continued quite free from anxiety, impatience, or low spirits, and that he passed his time away well, as usual, with the assistance of amusing books.

The next day, Dr. Smith received a letter from Mr. Hume himself, in the hand writing of his nephew, in which he says—"I go very fast to decline, and last night had a small fever, which I hoped might put a quicker period to this tedious illness; but, unluckily it has in a great measure gone off. I cannot submit to your coming over here on any account, as it is possible for me to see you so small a part of the day; but Dr. Black can better inform you concerning the degree of strength which may from time to time remain with me."

On the 25th, two days after writing the above letter, Mr Hume expired—"in such a happy composure of mind that nothing can exceed it;" so Doctor Smith expresses it; and to this I may add the exclamation of Dr. Robertson, of whose orthodoxy no one ever doubted, on reading the account at length of Mr. Hume's last moments. "Oh, what good Christian would not wish to die such a death."

Dr. Smith's letter concludes with the following summary of Mr. Hume's character:

"Thus died our excellent, and never to be forgotten friend; concerning whose political opinions men will no doubt judge variously; every one approving or condemning them according as they happen to coincide or agree with his own. But concerning whose character and conduct, there can scarce be a difference of opinion. His temper, indeed, seemed to be more happily balanced, if I may be allowed such an expression, than that, perhaps, of any other man I have ever known. Even in the lowest state of his fortune, his great and necessary frugality never hindered him from exercising, on proper occasions, acts both of *charity* and *generosity*. It was a frugality founded not upon avarice, but upon the love of independency. The extreme gentleness of his nature never weakened either the firmness of his mind, or the steadiness of his resolutions. His constant pleasure was the genuine effusion of good nature and good humor, tempered with delicacy and modesty, and without even the slightest tincture of malignity, so frequently the disagreeable source of what is called wit in other men. It never was the meaning of his rai- lery to mortify; and, therefore, far from offending, it seldom failed to please and delight even those who were the objects of it. To his friends who were frequently the objects of it, there was not, perhaps, any one of all his great and amiable qualities, which contributed more to endear his conversation. And that gaiety of temper so agreeable in society—but which is so often accompanied with frivolous and superficial qualities, was in him certainly attended with the most severe application, the most extensive learning, the greatest depth of thought, and a capacity in every respect, the most comprehensive. Upon the whole, I have always

considered him, both in his lifetime, and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a *perfectly wise and virtuous man* as, perhaps, the nature of human frailty will permit."

To be continued.

DOCTOR IN LONDON, TO THE PRIEST IN DUNDEE.

Continued from page 183.

Till the time of Copernicus, to use the words of the celebrated author, "all men believed that the earth was immoveable, and that the sun turned round it," but every school boy now knows the contrary.*

In all that experience and observation can bring forward, we cannot perceive, nor have we any knowledge of spiritual or supernatural power. In the more early ages of the world, nature seems to have been worshipped, and as allegorical signs were introduced, the ignorant soon began to confound her operations with the things which were thus allegorised. The source from which Jupiter and Apollo were formed was soon forgotten—religious systems were multiplied, and out of the vestiges of Pagan mythology a being has been created, and which no man has ever been able to describe; an incomprehensible something, that remains even at this day, in as great obscurity as when the tale of its existence was first invented. Your language, when you allude to the deity, whom you suppose endowed with passions, is so familiar, that no one would imagine you were so well versed in the subject, that to offer a doubt regarding his personal existence, would be to call in question the reality of our senses: deep and serious consideration, however, has long ago removed from my mind, all conjectures on this head, and the only deity which I can recognise in the works of the universe, is motion, that perpetual power which has always existed, and which is inseparable from the varied and never-ceasing modifications of matter.

To personify this principle has ever been a favorite trick with the founders of every religion; and none have been more contemptible in their formation of a deity than the vain and foolish Christians. Ask them to describe what he is, and they at once give you the accounts full of absurdity and contradiction; in fact, they know no more of a deity than what their heated imaginations create, and if pressed on the subject their tempers become ruffled—in a peevish tone they tell you that he is altogether incomprehensible; a quality which entirely renders his existence incapable of being understood. Conviction is always the effect of evidence and demonstration, and if you candidly consider the subject aloof from the prejudices of early tuition you will perhaps admit, that we have no satisfactory data to lead us to those conclusions which you have drawn. If you, however, think otherwise, and possess the knowledge for unfolding to mankind the real qualities of a deity so as to demonstrate that such a being exists, I will readily concede to you some of those points for which you have been contending; but this being must be one such as the followers of Mahomet and Christ adore (for they both worship the same deity) possessing all the passions peculiar to organization, yet strange as it is *immaterial and incomprehensible!*

* The ancient and enlightened Pythagoras is here however excepted; for amidst his speculations on the heavenly bodies there exists proof in his writings that he considered the sun the centre of a great system.

Common sense and reason are the guides which are often pointed out to demonstrate his existence; yet every one must be aware that these auxiliaries, notwithstanding all their deductions, are to us truly unavailing. To get out of the circle of these perplexities, I know of no way but by confiding in the knowledge of those principles that are the result of long experience and observation, (principles which indicate that the laws of Nature are invariable, and governed by a power altogether unintelligible) except by recognising it as a quality inherent in matter, and which to the philosophic mind, is sufficient to explain the phenomena that are continually presenting themselves throughout the extensive regions of the universe. It has not been without a due consideration of the effects which such opinions as these have upon the great bulk of mankind, that I feel convinced of their truth. If you call them *atheistical*, because they cannot recognise in the arrangement of nature a *personal* deity, I must remind you, that in all its bearing, according to lord Bacon, atheism leaves men to philosophy, to good nature, to human laws, and to reputation. It is by the study of nature alone that we can ever really know ourselves, and while those systems are followed that have nothing to recommend them but the most offensive superstition, the pure principles of morality will always be perverted. In my enquiries on this subject, I have been constantly guided by the best of motives; and if I have differed from you on what is considered the great leading doctrines of religion, it is possible that those views will lead you to a more extensive revisal of the whole affair than what you have hitherto known.

Think seriously, and, perhaps, our sentiments will be more congenial. You have already made a candid avowal that you know nothing of heaven. Had you been guided in your views on this subject as a believer in Christianity, you could have referred me to a variety of information concerning these ecclesiastical regions. The revelations of John furnish an ample scope for the reverie to dwell on; though to a thinking mind, they must appear as nothing more than the ravings of a bedlamer. I cannot think that had you possessed any knowledge of this unknown country, you would have been so uncourteous as to withhold it; I believe you are, like the rest of mankind, in total darkness regarding it. Divines, notwithstanding their boasted knowledge in these matters, have, in their calm and reflecting moments, felt like other men. Blair, in his poem, "The Grave," has even doubted the immortality of the soul—

"O that some courteous ghost would blab it out,
What 'tis we are, and we must shortly be,"

are words that certainly denote doubt, and when we call into view the general tenor of his sentiments, we cannot consider them in any other light than being strictly orthodox. Blair assuredly possessed the genius of a poet though he has written with all the rancor of a bigot. I never peruse the beautiful lines by Campbell, "On the grave of a Suicide," but I contrast his generous sentiments with the cruel, illiberal spirit that prevails on this subject in the poem of the grave. The feelings of Campbell do him honor; while those of Blair will always excite the just indignation of every virtuous man.

But as this is rather departing from the particular theme that I entered on, I must, before I proceed farther, entreat you to explain to me the subject of deity. Demonstrate that a being exists such as the Christians worship; unfold to me the nature of his existence; reconcile the inconsistent and truly absurd qualities that are always attached to him, and I will surrender to you all the knowledge that I have studiously obtained during the persevering industry of many years. You will, perhaps, reply, that it remains with me to give all this demonstration, for you have, when speaking of the *sun standing still*, told me that it is my province to explain to you the qualities of your God. But as I cannot believe in the existence of such a capricious being, or for one moment, seriously, the miraculous absurdities imputed to him, the *onus probandi* entirely rests with you; you have *affirmed* the things and I have *denied* them. I have therefore nothing to prove.

You have again and again, with the warmth of friendship, conjured me to think calmly upon the subject; I can assure you, I have long ago done so. I should have a poor opinion of the man who would assume the principles of infidelity as they are foolishly termed, merely for the sake of being considered singular. I should pity the weakness of any one who had not been brought to this mode of thinking by a fair process of reasoning, as much as I would admire the firmness of him who had the energy of intellect to think boldly for himself. What I have stated will therefore I hope convince you, that it is on no slight consideration that my sentiments are so very different from yours. No change of fortune, no situation in which fate may place me, will ever eradicate principles so firmly supported. I have had a trial in my mind regarding the truth of them, and can laugh at the folly of men, such as Addison, insinuating that it is only in the vigor of health and prosperity, these maxims are maintained. When death approaches, the horrors of it, they say, often change the scene. In former times, when the dominion of priestcraft was more extensive, instances of this kind might have frequently happened; even not long ago, the recantation of the weak minded Doctor Bateman, gave a triumph to the enemies of truth! Every methodistical magazine in the country teemed with the accounts of this supposed victory; but in general such pitiful death-bed repentance is seldom heard of. The progress of knowledge is advanced so far, that those who become converts to the cause are too deeply fixed in their opinions to disturb them.

I have experienced all the feeling which the prospect of dissolution could possibly create; yet it never made me to swerve from those ideas which, in the vigor of health, I tenaciously cherished. Overcome with the dire effects of a most violent disease, which removed me for some years from the bustle of the world, I often felt an inward pleasure, in communicating my sentiments to the friendly physician who attended me, and who was like every intelligent son of *Æsculapius*, devoted to the principles of materialism. When I had no other consolation but the thought of death to alleviate my miseries, the notion of a heaven or a hell appeared to me as they really are, the mere invention of priests. At one period of my illness I endured many calamities, and I well knew that in the grave my sorrows would cease: I dwelt with satisfaction on

the anticipation of that event when the feeble lamp of life was to expire. Amidst such troubles my worn-out heart often wished the change; "dull oblivion," I was convinced would follow; for I settled in the idea that neither the sweets of pleasure, nor the agonies of pain could ever be known in the gloomy mansions of the tomb.

These remarks have extended this letter to an unusual length; but they are, perhaps nevertheless, necessary. The statements in my last epistle have gone far to destroy the proof on which Christianity is formed. What you have brought forward in reply, evinces strongly that it has no firm foundation; but as you do not seem to yield to observations the force of which is only resisted by deep rooted prejudice, I have embraced another consideration that is equally connected with the subject. You may tell me, as on a former occasion, that this point is not the question, and cannot materially effect the leading doctrines of your religion. I however maintain, that before setting on such a bewildered track as that which the discussions of any system of theology present, the personal existence of God should be first settled. If the various effects that every where prevail in nature, can be referred to the action of that general principle which is never separated from matter, it will at once shake the basis not only of the system recognised by Christians, but shew that all religions have received their origin from one polluted source, which when properly examined, unfolds to our view the sad and lamentable picture of a few designing knaves operating, with success, on the credulity and ignorance of a large portion of mankind. The expression of your wishes for me to consider the subject seriously, has induced me to enter into some detail, and if any thing has been said that can be deemed superfluous, I beg you will overlook it. I feel a confidence in all I have advanced; and if you have any reply, be assured that I will use no delay in offering to you a more enlarged development of my principles.

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 1829.

* * * The restoration of the editor to his usual health, being still retarded, he hopes this will be regarded as a sufficient excuse for any inaccuracies that may have appeared in the *Correspondent*.

Progress of liberal opinions—The accounts we are frequently receiving, as to the advancement of liberal principles, continue to be of the most cheering nature. In several places, where the friends of these principles are known to each other, new societies are forming; in others, where, twelve months ago, scarcely a liberal was known to exist, they are now appearing, and avowing their sentiments in considerable numbers. "For this pleasing result (observes one writer) we are indebted to the accidental perusal of a number of the *Correspondent*, which has been widely circulated, and given confidence to many in this place, who are fully alive to the influence of the priesthood, but who might have long remained passive, had they not been encouraged to speak out from the knowledge, that one paper, at least, exists in this country which fearlessly

supports the truth." From another correspondent, whose zeal, and constant exertions to promote the cause, is equalled by few, we have received the following gratifying communication :—

Syracuse, March 31, 1829.

Dear Sir—I hope you will not attribute my long silence to indifference, or to a languid state of feeling on the subject of the advancement of what we consider to be truth contending with long established error; for neither my feelings or my exertions will, I think, suffer any abatement of zeal so long as the strenuous efforts of the friends of rational liberty are so much required, as they are at this day.

Although the leaders in the ranks of orthodoxy disclaim the idea of wishing to control in matters of state and government, yet no reflecting and unprejudiced person can for a moment doubt that this is their real object. The intentions of men are not the less apparent, and experience shows their conduct is not the more correct for being covered by the sanctimonious garb of the Christian, or any other system of religion which enacts penalties for the breach of "articles of faith." Thus a member may be suspended from communion with other members, and be debarred all other privileges (if they be called such) of the church, upon a suspicion of crime, which he no sooner confesses than he is again admitted to favor. We all of us know of persons contemptible from the commission of crime who have no sooner acknowledged themselves the knaves they truly were, than they were immediately restored; while the honest and virtuous member who happens to discover and express the absurdity of the mysteries of the holy trinity, and other matters equally inconceivable, is at once cast out and stigmatized with the name of infidel.

Mankind must cease to attach any merit to faith and matters of opinion, before they will consent to extend the hand of good fellowship to those who differ with them on topics of religious belief. A man possessed of truly liberal sentiments, will not trouble himself whether his neighbor believes in "one god or twenty gods," or no god at all, so long as his moral deportment is correct. This village, though much illiberality still exists, is fast approaching to a state of more extended benevolence, with regard to theological matters, than marks the character of many other places. Far be it from me, however, to take away one single comfort, from a religiously inclined and conscientious believer, by insisting on the perusal of books calculated to shake his faith in what he honestly conceives to be the truth. Still, no change in the public mind has ever been effected without producing a shock to the prejudices of more or less in every rank of society.

Why the priesthood should be alarmed at the rapid progress of the "march of mind," is best known to themselves. But *this we know*, that their kind and discriminating providence is never relied on by themselves for their living independent of their salaries. At this time, though the church has lost the power to hang and burn heretics, the disposition still exists, if we may judge from the virulence they manifest in their lectures. *Infidelity—blasphemous tracts—Free Press Association*—and the "female monster," Frances Wright—are now the popular themes of these men of holy calling. With this we cannot find fault, for no subject can

be well understood until it is examined, and this will have the effect of eliciting discussion which is all we want.

I have lately been on a visit to Utica and its neighborhood. This vicinity is, perhaps, as hard *priest ridden* as any other of which I have any knowledge. The liberals are yet too weak to come out boldly; but it wants only some fearless individual to set fire to the train. The mine must explode, and that too before long; and I could perceive, too, that the best informed are aware of it. The farce of excommunication, I am told, has been passed on me by the church, which deprives me, of course, of all its privileges—Noble privileges! which, though mine, I have not availed myself of for the last five years. Among the many who joined the church at or about the time I had that honor, by far the greater number are either excommunicated, suspended, or have voluntarily withdrawn themselves; and but few remain who are now in good standing. This I know to be a fact; and I cannot learn that many have taken to vicious courses who were not so before—Most of the expulsions are for *heresy* as the church calls it. The celebration of Paine's birth day produced a wonderful excitement in New Hartford. J. S.

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF OPINION.

From the Amendments to the Constitution of the United States:—

Art. 1. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceable to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

From the Constitution of Maine. Art. 1:—

§ 3. All men have a natural and unalienable right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own conscience, and no one shall be hurt, molested, or restrained, in his person, liberty, or estate, for worshipping God in the manner and season most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience, nor for his religious professions or sentiments, provided he does not disturb the public peace, nor obstruct others in their religious worship;—and all persons demeaning themselves peaceably, as good members of the state, shall be equally under the protection of the laws, and no subordination nor preference, of any one sect or denomination to another, shall ever be established by law, nor shall any religious test be required as a qualification for any office or trust under this state; and all religious societies in this state, whether incorporate, or unincorporate, shall at all times have the exclusive right of electing their public teachers, and contracting with them for their support and maintenance.

4. Every citizen may freely speak, write, and publish his sentiments on any subject, being responsible for the abuse of his liberty. No laws shall be passed regulating or restraining the freedom of the press.

From the Constitution of Massachusetts. Part first:—

Art. 2. It is the right, as well as the duty, of all men in society, publicly and at stated seasons, to worship the supreme being, the great creator and preserver of the universe. And no subject shall be hurt, molested, or restrained, in his person, liberty, or estate, for worshipping God in

the manner and seasons most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience ; or for his religious profession or sentiments ; provided he doth not disturb the public peace, or obstruct others in their religious worship.

3. As the happiness of a people, and the good order and preservation of civil government, essentially depend upon piety, religion, and morality, and as these cannot be generally diffused through the community, but by the institution of a public worship of God, and of public institutions in piety, religion, and morality ; therefore, to promote their happiness, and to secure the good order and preservation of their government, the people of this commonwealth have a right to invest their legislature with power to authorize and require, and the legislature shall, from time to time, authorize and require the several towns, parishes, precincts, and other bodies, politic, or religious societies, to make suitable provision, at their own expense, for the institution of the public worship of God, and for the support and maintenance of public protestant teachers of piety, religion, and morality, in all cases, where such provision shall not be made voluntarily.

All the people of the commonwealth have also a right to, and do, invest their legislature with authority to enjoin into all the subjects an attendance upon the instructions of the public teachers, as aforesaid, at stated, times and seasons, if there be any one whose instruction they can conscientiously and conveniently attend :

Provided, notwithstanding, that the several towns, parishes, precincts, and the other bodies, politic, or religious societies, shall, at all times, have the exclusive right of electing their public teachers, and of contracting with them for their support and maintenance.

All moneys paid by the subject to the support of public worship, and of the public teachers aforesaid, shall, if he require it, be uniformly applied to the support of the public teacher or teachers of his own religious sect or denomination, provided there be any, on whose instructions he attends, otherwise it may be paid towards the support of the teacher or teachers of the parish or precinct in which the said moneys are raised.

And every denomination of Christians demeaning themselves peaceably, and as good subjects of the commonwealth, shall be equally under the protection of the law : and no subordination of any sect or denomination to another shall ever be established by law.

16. The liberty of the press is essential to security of freedom in a state ; it ought not therefore, to be restrained in this commonwealth.

From the Constitution of New-Hampshire. Part 1. Bill of Rights :—

3. When men enter into a state of society, they surrender up some of their natural rights to that society, in order to ensure the protection of others ; and without such an equivalent the surrender is void.

4. Among the natural rights, some are in their very nature unalienable, because no equivalent can be given or received for them. Of this kind are the *rights of conscience*.

5. Every individual has a natural and unalienable right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and reason ; and no person shall be hurt, molested, or restrained, in his person, liberty, or estate, for worshipping God in the manner most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience, or for his religious profession, sentiments, or per-

suasion; provided he doth not disturb the public peace, or disturb others in their religious worship.

6. And every denomination of Christians demeaning themselves quietly, and as good citizens of the state, shall be equally under the protection of the law: and no subordination of any one sect or denomination to another, shall ever be established by law.

22. The *liberty of the press* is essential to the society of freedom in a state: it ought, therefore, to be inviolably preserved.

From the Constitution of Vermont:—

Art. 3. That all men have a natural and unalienable right to worship almighty God according to the dictates of their own conscience and understandings, as in their opinion shall be regulated by the word of God: and that no man ought to, or of right can, be compelled to attend any religious worship, or erect or support any place of worship, or maintain any minister, contrary to the dictates of his conscience; nor can any man be justly deprived or abridged of any civil right as a citizen, on account of his religious sentiments or peculiar mode of religious worship; and that no authority can or ought to be vested in, or assumed by, any power whatever, that shall in any case interfere with, or in any manner control, the rights of conscience in the free exercise of religious worship. Nevertheless, every sect or denomination of Christians ought to observe the Sabbath, or Lord's day, and keep up some sort of religious worship, which to them shall seem most agreeable to the revealed will of God.

13. That the people have a right to freedom of speech, and of writing and publishing their sentiments, concerning the transactions of government and therefore the freedom of the press ought not to be restrained.

From the Charter of Rhode Island. Granted by king Charles II.:—

That no person within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be anywise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any differences in opinion in matters of religion, who do not actually disturb the civil peace of our said colony; but that all and every person and persons may from time to time, and at all times hereafter, freely and fully have and enjoy his own and their judgments and consciences, in matters of religious concerns, throughout the tract of land hereafter mentioned, they behaving themselves peaceably and quietly, and not using this liberty to licentiousness and profaneness, nor to the civil injury or outward disturbance of others; any law, statute, or clause therein contained, or to be contained, usage, or custom of this realm, to the contrary hereof, in any wise notwithstanding.

From the Constitution of Connecticut. Art. 1:—

§ 3. The exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination, shall forever be free to all persons in this state, provided that the right hereby declared and established shall not be so construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness or to justify practices inconsistent with the peace and safety of the state.

§ 4. No preference shall be given by law to any Christian sect or mode of worship.

§ 5. Every citizen may freely speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty.

§ 6. No law shall ever be passed to curtail or restrain the liberty of speech or of the press.

Art. 7. § 1. It being the duty of all men to worship the supreme being, the great creator and preserver of the universe, and their right to render that worship in the mode most consistent with the dictates of their conscience: no person shall, by law, be compelled to join or support, nor be classed with, or associated to, any congregation, church, or religious association. But every person now belonging to such congregation, church, or religious association, shall remain a member thereof, until he shall have separated himself therefrom, in the manner herein after provided. And each and every society, or denomination of Christians in this state, shall have and enjoy the same and equal powers, rights, and privileges; and shall have power and authority to support and maintain the ministers or teachers of their respective denominations, and to build and repair houses for public worship, by a tax on the members of any such society only, to be laid by a major vote of the legal voters assembled at any society meeting, warned and held according to law, or in any other manner.

§ 2. If any person shall choose to separate himself from the society or denomination of Christians to which he may belong, and shall leave a written notice thereof with the clerk of such society, he shall thereupon be no longer liable for any future expenses which may be incurred by said society.

From the Constitution of New York. Art. 7 :—

§ 3. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall for ever be allowed in this state, to all mankind; but the liberty of conscience hereby secured, shall not be so construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness, or justify practices inconsistent with the peace or safety of this state.

4. And whereas the ministers of the gospel are, by their profession dedicated to the service of God, and the care of souls, and ought not to be diverted from the great duties of their functions; therefore, no minister of the gospel, or priest of any denomination whatsoever, shall at any time hereafter, under any pretence or description whatever, be eligible to, or capable of holding any civil or military office or place within this state.

8. Every citizen may freely speak, write, and publish his sentiments, on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that right; and no law shall be passed to restrain or abridge the liberty of speech, or of the press.

To be continued.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Easter-day is observed all over Christendom with peculiar rites. In the catholic church high mass is celebrated, the host is adored with the greatest reverence, and both catholics and protestants might be led from it, to a more particular attention to the circumstance attending its form and substance. The *host*, derived from the Latin word *hostia*, meaning

a victim, is a consecrated wafer, of a circular form, composed of flour and water. Both substance and form are regulated by custom of very ancient date. On the night before his execution, Jesus took bread, and blessing it, divided it among his missionaries; but the bread he took was not ordinary bread, but unleavened bread, such as is used by the Jews during the passover week in the present days. This bread is composed of merely flour and water, no leaven during the festival of their passover being permitted to enter the house of a Jew. It is a kind of biscuit of a circular form, and the *host* thus, by its form and substance, brings us back to the recollection of the catholics, and the rite celebrated by Jesus. It is the representation of the Jewish cake, or unleavened bread, which is to this day eaten by that nation during the passover week.

The protestants have deviated from this custom, and in their churches use leavened bread, without any regard to form; and they cut it with a knife into small pieces, forgetting that Jesus broke the bread; but some use leavened bread, and, as they cannot break it, they attempt to imitate Jesus' action by tearing it in pieces.

Old Easter customs in church.—In the celebration of this festival, the Romish church amused our forefathers by theatrical representations, and extraordinary dramatic worship, with appropriate scenery, machinery, dresses, and decorations. The exhibitions at Durham appear to have been conducted with great effect. In that cathedral, over our lady of Bolton's altar, there was a marvelous, lively, and beautiful image of the picture of our lady, called the lady of Bolton, which picture was made to open with *gimmes*, (or linked fastenings,) from the breast downward; and within the said image was wrought and pictured the image of our saviour, marvellously finely gilt, holding up his hands, and betwixt his hands was a large fair crucifix of Christ, all of gold; and which crucifix was ordained to be taken forth every good Friday, and every man did *creep* unto it that was in the church at that time; and afterwards it was hung up again within the said image. Every principal day the said image of our lady of Bolton, was opened, that every man might see pictured within her, the father, the son, and the holy ghost, most curiously and finely gilt; and both the sides within her were very finely varnished with green varnish, and flowers of gold, which was a godly sign for all the beholders thereof. On good Friday, there was marvelous solemn service, in which service time, after the *passion* was sung, two of the ancient monks took a goodly large crucifix, all of gold, of the picture of our saviour Christ, nailed upon the cross, laying it upon a velvet cushion, having St. Cuthbert's arms upon it, all embroidered with gold, bringing it betwixt them upon the cushion to the lowest steps in the choir, and there betwixt them did hold the said picture of our saviour, sitting on either side of it. And then one of the said monks did rise, and went a pretty space from it, and sitting himself upon his knees with his shoes put off, very reverently he *crept upon his knees* unto the said cross, and most reverently did kiss it; and after him the other monk did so likewise; and then they sate down on either side of the said cross, holding it betwixt them. Afterward, the prior came forth of his stall, and did sit him down upon his

knees with his shoes off in like sort, and did *creep* also unto the said cross, and all the monks after him did *creep* one after another in the same manner and order; in the mean time, the whole choir singing a hymn. The service being ended, the said two monks carried the cross to the sepulchre with great reverence.

St. Bede.—The life of "Venerable Bede," in Butler, is one of the best memoirs in his biography of the saints. He has an Englishman, in priest's orders. It is said of him that he was a prodigy of learning in an unlearned age; that he surpassed Gregory the great in eloquence and copiousness of style, and that Europe scarcely produced a greater scholar. He was a teacher of youth, and, at one time had six hundred pupils, yet he exercised his clerical functions with punctuality, and wrote an incredible number of works on theology, science, and the polite arts. It is true he fell into the prevailing credulity of the early age wherein he flourished, but he enlightened it by his erudition, and improved it by his unfeigned piety and unwearied zeal. As an instance of the desire to attribute wonderful miracles to distinguished characters, the following anecdote concerning Bede is extracted from the "Golden Legend." He was blind, and desiring to be led forth to preach, his servant carried him to a heap of stones, to which the good father, believing himself preaching to a sensible congregation, delivered a noble discourse, whereunto, when he had finished his sermon, the stones answered and said "Amen!"

Puritanism.—In the year 1649, the exuberant locks which began to curl on the heads and flow down the shoulders of the people of Massachusetts, became the subjects of attention to the rulers of the puritans. The governor, deputy governor and magistrates, entered into a "coalition" to reform the growing abuse in the state. Their indignation against long hair broke out in the following manifesto.—"Foreasmuch as the wearing of long hair, after the manner of ruffians and barbarous Indians, has begun to invade New England, contrary to the rule of God's word, which says it is a shame for a man to wear long hair, as also the commendable custom generally, of all the godly of our nation until within these few years. We, the magistrates, who have subscribed this paper, for the shewing of our own innocence in this behalf, do declare and manifest our dislike and detestation against the wearing of such long hair, as against a thing uncivil and unmanly, whereby men do deform themselves, and offend sober and modest men and do corrupt good manners. We, therefore, do earnestly entreat all the elders of this jurisdiction as often as they shall see cause, to manifest their zeal against it in their public administration, and to take care that the members of their respective churches be not defiled therewith, that no such as shall prove obstinate and will not reform themselves, may have God and man to witness against them."

Hot Cross Buns.—Formerly "hot-cross-buns" were commonly eaten in London by families at breakfast, and some families still retain the

usage. They are of the usual form of buns; though they are distinguished from them inwardly by a sweeter taste, and the flavor of all-spice, and outwardly by the mark or sign of the cross. The "hot-cross-bun" is the most popular symbol of the Roman catholic religion in England that the reformation has left. Of the use of the cross, as a mark or sign in papal worship and devotion, most readers are aware; for it has been insisted on by Roman catholic writers from the days of Constantine to Alban Butler himself, who giving example of its great virtue on good Friday, says, "to add one more instance, out of many, St. Teresa assures us, in her own life, that one day the devil, by a phantom, appeared to sit on the letters of her book, to disturb her at her devotions; but she drove him away *thrice* by the sign of the cross, and at last sprinkled the book with holy water; after which he returned no more." In the houses of some ignorant people, a good Friday bun is still kept "for luck," and sometimes there hangs from the ceiling a hard biscuit-like cake of open cross-work baked on a good Friday, to remain there till displaced on the next good Friday by one of similar make.

Free Press Association.—The meetings of the Association are now held in the Bowery Long Room, opposite the Theatre; where a lecture will be delivered to-morrow (Sunday) afternoon, at 3 o'clock, on the *proofs of the existence of Jesus Christ, and the origin of Christianity*—By Mr. Houston.

In the evening, at half-past 6 o'clock, the following question will be debated:—*Would the death of Jesus Christ, as an atonement for the sins of the human race, be consonant to the principles of justice?*

Tickets of admission to the debate, (to be had at the door) three cents each. Ladies free.

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